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AND CHARLES COUNTY ADVERTISER.



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AND ALL KINDS OF NOTIONS AT THE VERY LOWEST PRICES. nov 27-1y

Selected Story.

THE HUSLES OF HOLWYCH.

More than thirty years have elapsed since the circumstances hereinafter related aroused a curiosity and interest by no means limited to the neighborhood of their occurrence. On a bright May morning, in 1835, Colonel Cuthbert Elderton, accompanied by his fair little newly-married wife, quitted London in search of a country home. The world—as in the case of another pair of whom we have not unfrequently heard—was all before them, where to choose; and, having no reason for special haste, they resolved to examine at least such parts of it as might be conveniently visited in a fortnight, and a mail-phaeton.

After being all but ensnared by the sombre charms of an old Elizabethian mansion, well clothed with wood, which proved to have been a lunatic asylum some years after declining, with thanks, a brighter-looking residence, whose latest proprietor had pushed his wife into a well, (the law, however, in its ever-growing tenderness for murder, refusing to convict him,) the Colonel and his wife found themselves, at the end of a week, passing the pretty little cluster of cottages, and the one irregular street which at that time represented Holwyeh.

The broad sunny uplands on the one hand, and the wooded water-alley on the other, the traveler and the scene so attractive that they determined to halt at the village inn—the Swan—take their lunch, and make some local inquiries.

"Curious!" remarked the Colonel, thoughtfully, as they presently stood together at a back window of the inn, commanding a view of the adjacent country.

"What dear?"

"I have never, to my remembrance, passed through this place before, yet somehow, it—it seems to know me."

"Know you! How?" asked his wife, laughing.

"That's more than I can say!" replied the Colonel, still with a puzzled look. "I can really hardly explain my meaning—but it's something like being not quite certain that it isn't your brother."

"William, your brother, does he live in this neighborhood?" said Mrs. Elderton, pertly.

"Ha! that's it no doubt!" responded her spouse.

"But, Cuthbert, don't they say that people sometimes have previsions, or forebodings—of things and places yet to come?"

"Often. At this very moment," replied the Colonel, still at the window, "I have a prevision of certain mutton-chops about to become reality, for I can hear the waiter saying so."

"You always laugh at such things," said his wife, dissentingly.

"Chops? I don't instantly deny it?" responded her hungry spouse, opening the door to listen.

"No, Mysteries."

"On the contrary, I like them. I solve them, too, sometimes. For example, the sort of prevision you speak of, dear, probably means, nine times in ten, that having formed a very definite opinion as to something you would like, when, years and years after, it suddenly presents itself, you claim it as an old friend."

"I am certain it is a fate. We are to live here," said Mrs. Elderton, decisively.

"At this moment the lunch appeared."

"I almost think we decided too hastily against that pretty Wilcoats," remarked the Colonel, as they sat down.

"It is just the place I should do so," said his wife enthusiastically.

"Vacant, too, dear."

"What could that man mean by saying there was nothing in the neighborhood?"

"The waiter? I can only account for it," replied the Colonel, "by the supposition that some friend of his, just married—and ready under those demoralizing circumstances, to indulge his wife's every whim—has an eye upon it already."

"Oh, Cuthbert, does that mean—?"

"It means, at all events, that we'll make some inquiry. But how to get—hallo, you!"

A boy of leading aspect coated with moss, as if he had been bird nesting upon some venerable tree, had just appeared from behind a clump of elder bushes.

"Hallo, you!" returned the boy like a surely echo.

"Who looks after this place?"

"None but th' ushers, I 'low," replied the youth, grinning.

"The ushers? It's a school then?"

"If it's there, a vacancy," responded the remarkable boy, with a second grin.

"Do these ushers receive people who wish to see the house and grounds?"

"No. They keeps 'em away," said the boy. "And, pressing his hands on his bulgy pockets as though conscious of something contraband, he prowled away."

"I'll see the agent to-night at Hatchford," said the Colonel, as they regained the carriage.

"The neglected mansion had, in truth, taken the fancy of both. They could talk of nothing else, and, long ere they reached Hatchford, had not only made the property their own, but transformed it into a model of perfection, wherein art and nature strove in vain for mastery."

After dinner the Colonel, with assumed indifference, thought he would staid down to see the agent, Mr. Brodgett. He did not invite his wife's company, fearing, peradventure, that

her undisguised desire to possess the mansion at Holwyeh might somewhat interfere with the bargain he hoped to effect. So he told her she was tripped.

Mr. Brodgett, who was still at work in his office, readily forgave the Colonel's untimely visit, and furnishing all the needed information. The "Mansion," as it was called, of Holwyeh was untenanted; had been so in effect, for some little time—a couple of years or so—the rent being high, very high, (in fact, four hundred a year.) Seeing that the land was limited to about a dozen acres, without shooting—for Mr. Brodgett would not allude to the right of shooting dabbiches in the Mumble as sport—the rent was high. But, then, there were reasons; the mansion was historical.

"Historical?"

"Connected with one of the most interesting periods of English history. The Lord Chancellor Jeffreys, by some writers styled the 'bloody,' is said to have resided there."

"The deuce he has!" ejaculated the Colonel, thinking of his nervous little wife.

"But," resumed Mr. Brodgett, seeing his mistake, and with an indulgent smile, "this is not based on any recorded facts. Holwyeh, you must know, was formerly the assize town, and possibly his Lordship, when Judge on this circuit, might have passed a night at the mansion. Then, Sir, the singular beauty of the grounds—"

"My good Sir, the terms are simply absurd," said the Colonel, decisively.

"So I ventured to tell my principal," replied Mr. Brodgett, laughing. "But he is a man who hates small transactions—petty investments, you know. 'Get me four hundred,' Brodgett, he wrote, 'or let the owls have it rent free.' By-the-by," continued the agent, looking among his papers, in a letter, following which latter they came upon a gate, strong and securely locked, but with open bars, thus affording a view of the garden and grounds in rear of the mansion. These appeared to be even more picturesque and beautiful than the Colonel had anticipated. Broad terraces, spacious lawns—some level, some sloping downward toward the river, whose murmur, as it rippled over some invisible weir, could be faintly heard; clumps of maple, pine and alder; clocked-up flower beds; moss-covered fountains; everywhere a still warfare between order and confusion, in which the former was being gradually overborne.

The gardeners on the central lawn there commenced an avenue of huge and venerable walnut trees, terminating in an alone of open Summer-house of white stone. Shut out from the house by the intervening trees, this building was so placed as evidently to command, not only the fairest portions of the garden, but the distant country beyond.

"Why, Cuthbert, it is a paradise!" exclaimed Mrs. Elderton, visions of matrimony already chasing each other through her active mind.

It was, in truth, a smiling scene. The apple and pear blossoms—these must have been a hobby of some former proprietor—were absolutely dazzling; and the young May leaves, with their soft, fresh tints, completed the natural glory of the scene. The mansion itself, on this side, presented quite a cheerful aspect, the rear face being either painted red, or faced with brick, and abundantly clothed with pear and pomegranate, trained round the windows, which opened to the ground.

"The house is a humbug!" remarked the Colonel. "Who, from its fronting front, would have expected a scene like this?"

"It is just the place I should do so," said his wife enthusiastically.

"Vacant, too, dear."

"What could that man mean by saying there was nothing in the neighborhood?"

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